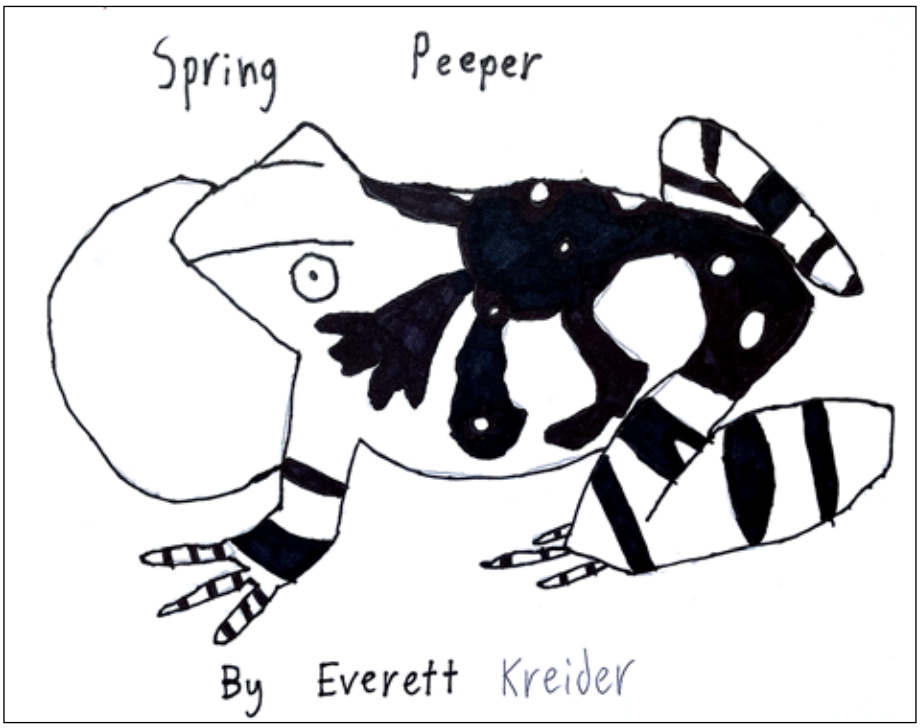
MONTEREY NEWS

May 2023 Est. 1970
Vol. LIII · Number 5

Pick up at: the library (in and outside), outside town hall, transfer station



"Spring Peeper" by Everett Kreider, 9 years old. See pages 16 and 17 for more.

Can we rely on the decisions that have been made by one select board in a given term to have validity when new board members are elected?
Trading our History for Dollars page 24

Maybe it helps to remember that the flies that bite us are feeding someone else.
Blackflies page 18

Heather Kowalski

We are looking forward to at least three local musicians having concerts under the tent.
Monterey Community Center page 8

The Renewable Energy Working Group has printed a summary of the assessment of solar energy potential in the town.
A Primer for Sunpower page 6

It has opened my eyes to understand that no other organisms, including people I know, experience their umwelt in just the way I do—so I am trying to stretch my own thinking.
Books in Brief page 31

I wished I could travel through a wormhole in space/ time, and whisper to her to just relax, tell her that everything was going to be all right, eventually.
A Backward Glance page 30

Saturday, May 6: Annual town meeting, 9:30 a.m., firehouse.
Tuesday, May 9: Town elections, 12 to 7 p.m., town hall.

Do we really need a noise by-law?
In My View page 2

Want to learn about the FY 2024 budget?
Informational Session page 6

There are approximately forty volunteers who distribute twenty to twenty-four boxes of food serving about fifty people each week.
Pantry PickUp page 10

No matter how odd we may think this spring has been, if the plants are resilient we can be, too. At least for now.
May Wildlife Report page 28

Some history of cutting the "Sleigh Road" from Sheffield to New Glaskow (Blandford) in the early 1700s.
The Brewer Family, Part II page 22

May is "Older Americans Month." Lace up those sneakers!
Council on Aging page 7

Bonsai Cox

In My View

Noise By-law and Fire Company Requests

Unreasonable Noise By-law—do we really need a noise by-law?

The short answer: Yes, I think we do. In brief, this noise by-law gives the police a new tool to encourage folks to be good neighbors by issuing a ticket rather than a state misdemeanor offense. While most of us are pretty good neighbors, there are a few repeat offenders in our town who are either heedless of their neighbors or use noise as an intentional disturbance. That isn't right and it can be very unpleasant to live next to.

The longer answer: Being a good neighbor can be challenging. Most of us try to balance our own enjoyment of our property with the knowledge that we live in a community and sound carries. But many of us have at some time lived in a house with someone who wasn't sufficiently thoughtful of the lives or sleep of others. In a household, we usually have some type of relationship that helps us mediate and navigate that situation.

Now imagine that person as your neighbor. Perhaps you are on excellent terms with them, and can have an easy discussion and resolve the issue. When my neighbor's dog is barking madly (which is rare), I will often call round to make sure everything is okay (and they did the same before my dog passed). Sometimes she is alerting on a bear or a delivery person, and we both feel better checking in on each other. But, sadly not everyone has loving, or even cordial, relationships with their neighbors. And when that is the case, it is good to have some means to help curb the worst excesses of poor behavior. The unfortunate truth is that Monterey has a few repeat offenders who habitually use loud noise and music as a weapon against their neighbors. This by-law will give the police a milder tool than issuing a citation for disturbing the peace, which is a Massachusetts misdemeanor. And for those who are happy to disturb their neighbors, they will have to pay for that privilege. Chief Fahey assures me that they will continue to use thoughtful dispute resolution whenever possible, and frankly I trust him to do so. But sometimes that is just not enough.

In addition, there are several summer camps in Monterey. I went to summer camp for years as a kid, and loved it. I know that music and outdoor entertainment can be a great joy. But it is also vital that camp operators be ever cognizant of the fact that they are part of residential neighborhoods. This was indeed an issue before the select board last summer, and I am told has been an issue in previous years. This by-law will again give the town an additional option for encouraging better behavior.

Planning a big party with live music to celebrate some major life event? Maybe think about inviting your neighbors. Have a dog that barks all day and all night? Maybe think about working with a reputable trainer to help the dog find better ways to use its energy. These are things that are probably the right thing to do anyway. Let's all try to be better neighbors. This by-law just gives us another tool, and a pretty gentle one, to encourage better behavior. Chief Fahey does not think this will result in a whirlwind of absurd complaints, and he is ready to gently mediate whenever possible, as he has done for years. This is not a problem for everyone, but for the folks who are burdened by bad neighbors, let's give the town one more tool to help mitigate this issue.

Fire Department Requests

We will be replacing the aging Med 9 vehicle with a new SUV equipped to handle medical issues, which are a frequent reason for deployment. This vehicle is relatively compact and can reach any home in Monterey. Kitted out to hold all the necessary equipment, this vehicle will cost about $89,000. Then Chief Tryon is planning to take the body of the current brush truck and put it onto the chassis of the old Med 9, to make a new effective brush truck for approximately $40,000. The chief reports that this is the best compromise vehicle he could arrange for the lowest price, given both the current vehicles under manufacture and their cost. This totals $129,000, which appears on the special articles of the warrant.

The new Med 9 vehicle will be equipped with an electric hydraulic rescue apparatus (what the rest of us call the "jaws of life," which is apparently a patented name). The electric version is substantially smaller and will better fit in the new, smaller vehicle, while still being completely effective. The apparatus costs $52,000, some of which will be recovered through the sale of the existing equipment. We can't estimate that amount, because the auctioning platform gets excellent but unpredictable prices.

Several of the fire department pagers are aging out or damaged in the line of duty. Replacement cost of the pagers is $6,600.

And finally, a regulating nozzle on one of the hoses has been a consistent problem for several years. While the chief has tried valiantly to fix it, it's time to replace it so we have one that works reliably. The new nozzle costs $10,000. I'm glad I just use garden hoses.

See you all at Town Meeting on Saturday, May 6, at 9:30 in the firehouse pavilion.

—Susan Cooper
Select Board member

Editor's Note: In My View *provides individual board members an opportunity to communicate their thoughts about town affairs—reflections, opinions, and updates on topics of their choice. The views expressed are solely those of the writer, and are not meant to reflect the views of the full board.*

The *Monterey News* is published monthly by The Monterey News Inc, PO Box 9, Monterey, MA 01245-0009.

rain in the garden
a self-contained universe
of water and green.
—Laura S. Denman

Candidate Forum

For the past few years since Covid hit the *Monterey News* has developed a list of questions in consultation with various folks about some of the issues facing Monterey. These were written to pose to prospective candidates for the select board and finance committee prior to any nominations, and for the readers to become aware of issues as well.

Town Administrator: Monterey is in the third year with a town administrator. The contract, which is due for renewal in early 2024, governs the role of the administrator. As the position develops to serve Monterey, how do you view the TA's responsibilities, authorities, and the leadership role among all the various departments, boards, and committees?

School merger: The two closest school districts, South Berkshire (which Monterey is a part of) and Berkshire Hills, are both having to deal with declining enrollment and rising costs. This has led to the formation of a study group from the eight towns which is heading towards recommending merging the two districts. However, some people feel that there is an opportunity for greater cooperation between the two districts rather than merging. A merger would result in the need for an entirely new high school to be built in Great Barrington.

At this point, it is likely that select board will be asked in the coming months to approve an article for a future town meeting to approve a merger.

What are your thoughts about the challenges that face our districts and possible solutions?

Adaptations for Climate Change: Climate change is having, and will continue to have, real impact on Monterey. Increasing freeze-thaw cycles for our roads, especially our gravel roads; managing stormwater run-off during critical weather events leading to flooding where there is insufficient capacity (ditches, culverts, ponds and lakes and other holding areas); and changes in the natural environment, and perhaps to our winter culture. This will have an impact on our finances.

How should the town deal effectively with these impacts?

Roles of the SB, FC and TA in preparing the budget: The select board, working with the town administrator, is responsible for preparing a budget to put before the town. The finance committee has an advisory role in the process.

This year, as in the past, the budget is being built using the "incremental" method by looking at the previous year budget as a baseline and allowing for inflation and other adjustments.

This year the finance committee felt that given the size of the budget, and the challenge of keeping spending in line, a more responsible way to build a budget would be to have departments make spending requests supported by documented needs, called "zero-based budgeting." This requires that every item be justified by current data (needs, prices, staffing, etc.)

Which process do you feel is better for balancing the cost for town operations and the interests of the taxpayers?

Capital Spending: Our town, as with every town, is faced with some large capital spending requirements for facilities, infrastructure, and equipment. The town already carries various loans on its balance sheet, some of which are rolled over with interest payments alone, stretching out the terms of these loans. What is your view for the best way to handle current and past capital spending needs that leaves the town able to address future capital needs?

Noise ordinance: "Unreasonable" noise is an issue that comes up from time to time, but the town has no by-law to regulate nuisance noise. Enforcement can be very tricky for how to set limits, how to fairly measure noise over various terrains and over time.

Do you feel the town needs to regulate "unreasonable" noise?

Communications with the town: Communications with the residents involving town governance and operations prior to our experience with Covid was limited mostly to the town website and information found in the *Monterey News*. The demands of Covid and the growth of technologies (increasing high-speed broadband, online meeting apps, Monterey Community Google group) have opened the door to greater communication possibilities. However, these recent improvements are all based on access and skill with the Internet and good broadband service.

Do you feel that the town does an adequate job of communicating with the residents?

Housing and Demographics: The cost of housing, and inadequate housing available for low- and middle-income families, is a problem everywhere. In our town, as for many south county towns, the population is "graying," with fewer young families able to find housing and afford to live here. It is in the town's long-term cultural and financial interest to have a diversity of residents.

This is not an easy situation for the town to deal with directly, but there are some tools or opportunities available.For example, short-term rentals taxes and regulations, which are becoming more common (to keep full-time housing on the market vs. short-term rentals), zoning changes to make clustered housing possible, grant programs to help keep existing housing stock in livable conditions.

How do you think the town can best work to improve housing accessibility and cost?

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Frank Abbott- Select Board

Adaptations for Climate Change: Sound planning addressing both short- and long-term needs will be required as "we" (the town departments, TA, SB, FC, and all residents) move forward, particularly when addressing adaptations for climate change.

Current projections indicate climate change will impact winters more including more ice, heavier snowfall yet twenty-six fewer freezing days by 2050. With increasing freeze/thaw cycles, our unpaved roads are and will be detrimentally impacted. The state is developing public guidelines (and cost predictions) on how to update our unpaved roads. Much of our existing infrastructure is not built for the future or even the current rain and temperature projections.

The select board adopted a "Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaption Plan" in December 2020 which was approved for five years by FEMA. Some of the suggestions have been implemented and some are in the process (Route 23/Konkapot Culvert) and Hupi Road/Lake Garfield storm drainage. We will need to re-visit this plan soon, well before its 2025 expiration.

We need to develop and implement sustainable, cost-effective, and environmentally sound mitigation projects and include them in our long-term capital budget. While many grants are and will be available, we need to develop new policies for saving and preparing for large and/or unplanned expenses across the board.

Adaptation to climate change will require adaptation to change from all of us.

The town has a great resource and partnership through the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission who can guide us through these changes. For more information go to the tab "Climate Resiliency" on the town's website, montereyma.gov.

Roles of the SB, FC and TA, and capital spending: These two questions asked are directly related to how you create budgets, and who sits at the table when forming expense and capital budgets. The objective is how you want to spend our money. How to maintain a high level of support and service that the citizens expect and have received while holding expenses within reason.

How much you spend on operating costs has a direct impact on how much you can spend on capital costs. Having a diverse group of people debating and formulating these budgets is good for the community.

After sitting on the finance committee for a year I understand the importance of why the finance committee is critical to the budget process. The select board makes the final decisions, but this year the finance committee offered some diverse opinions about different aspects of the proposed budget. The select board, finance committee, town administrator all should be part of producing a workable budget. The three department managers' roles also play an important part in producing these budgets.

Historically, the town has been able to maintain a high level of service, with a fair tax rate. However, the economy has changed. Although inflation has started to recede, its impact will be felt for a long time. At the same time the cost of borrowing money and labor costs, like inflation, have skyrocketed.

Starting in the new 2024 financial year I would recommend zero-based budgeting. The current finance committee has been talking about this process. To successfully use zero-based budgeting, you need to track your expenses and assign those expenses to categories starting with the new financial year. For example, tracking the individual costs for what a department spends on maintaining each specific vehicle. Creating the next budget, the data gathered will allow us to recognize trends, good and bad, and this information will help to make better decisions when formulating the next budget. It's data driven.

Capital Spending: The proposed 2024 budget documents an almost 24% ($74,123) reduction in debt services because a fire vehicle and transfer station are now debt free. The fire truck and transfer station total debt relief are approximately $153k and some of that savings was replaced with new debt. This kind of reduction is tremendous help in holding down our overall expenses in the 2024 proposed budget. Adding debt must be very strategic, especially with higher interest and operating costs.

To determine how capital is spent there needs to be a lot of discussion about needs versus wants for capital projects. From that discussion, priorities need to be set. There must be continuing investments in the community.

The proposed budget for 2024 is 12.53% higher than the budget of 2022. These numbers are an indication of the challenges we will have in creating future budgets. Moving forward, I'm confident that the select board, finance committee, and others, working together, can make the right decisions so that we meet our needs and have an affordable, workable budget for the town.

—Frank Abbott

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Jeff Zimmerman- Finance Committee

These are all important questions for Monterey. I am glad to be able to address them. Rather than speak to each question separately, I am responding from more of a process standpoint; from the standpoint of "how" to address these issues, rather than putting forth a specific solution to each.

Getting Out Ahead of Decisions

I believe we need to adopt an approach that allows us, as much as possible, to be out ahead of big decisions, so that we can thoughtfully study options to address capital expenditures, affordable housing, the culvert, the impact of global warming, etc. At times we may need to create study groups (or enlist experts), as we have in the past, to look at approaches and alternatives and provide input into the complex, and often costly decisions that are and will be in front of us. We cannot wait until there is a crisis or expect a few people on the different boards and committees to be able to know all there is to know about the wide variety of the challenges we are facing and will face in the future.

From a budgetary standpoint, I believe we need to routinely use a realistic zero-based or balanced budget that incorporates short- and long-term thought and planning. In the short run, careful analysis needs to be applied to assess each department's needs and expenses, as well as their anticipated special needs and how these expenses relate to our anticipated revenue. Needs should be distinguished from wants as we look at potential expenditures.

In the long run we need dynamic strategic planning and policies. These will change over time as we anticipate and prepare for future needs. We need to manage our finances in a way that is thoughtful and effective. Policies related to saving for extraordinary expenses and staggering predictable capital expenses can help.

It Is More than Just the Budget

However, we need to look at our financial well-being from a position that is greater than just our budget. While of course our budget is an important piece, we also need to look at our policies and approaches to financial management. In my opinion it is important to look at our spending from an over-arching perspective. We need to be able to answer questions such as, "Which debts (if any) should just be addressed by paying the minimum payment?" "Which debts should we pay on schedule?" and "On which debts should we take an accelerated payment approach?" This also should be applied to taking on new debt, as we consider how to finance the debt and what impact a specific expenditure, or obligation will have, when it comes to other expenses (both those that are predictable, and those that are not predictable).

When it comes to major capital expenses and initiatives we need to actively plan, save for, and seek out what additional funding may be available. This is true for the initiatives mentioned in the questions as well as for the school merger. Here too, we need careful study from many perspectives, including doing an analysis of the financial components of the different options.

The Importance of Input from Monterey's Employees

In terms of the town administrator's role, I think the role of the town administrator is crucial to the planning and decision-making process (among the many other responsibilities of the position). I see it as the "hub of the wheel" that provides long-term continuity, as the governance of the town changes year to year. In my opinion, the position requires excellent organizational, communication, and people skills. From a finance committee perspective, I would also expect the town administrator to help with data aggregation during the planning process so that the finance committee can effectively deliberate and offer input to the select board and the town.

However, the input process goes well beyond that of the town administrator. Each department in the town has a role in the budgeting process, and planning for special projects that relate to that department. There should be a healthy process of inquiry into options, and pros and cons of different approaches to address a specific question so that we balance costs and impact in a strategic manner.

This does not just relate to town employees, but also to other boards and committees. We need to see ourselves as part of a greater whole that is interdependent.

The Need for Communication

Ultimately, the town itself makes many major decisions that are informed by our employees and volunteers. This requires a communication process that provides information in many ways. Some of our community is very experienced with technology and has the resources to easily connect to the town website. Yet, I am sure there are many residents who do not have that technology or are not comfortable using it. We need to look at our website as an evolving platform and repeatedly address questions related to its organization, ease of use, the clarity of its menu structure, its search functions, etc. We need to be able to easily see what is happening in all the many corners of town governance without having to search through and read detailed minutes of every board and committee.

For example, I could imagine there being a page perhaps entitled, "This Week in Monterey." Such a page could have bullet-point updates from our town offices, boards, and committees. Such a webpage could also be printed and made available for people who need a paper copy.

Video streaming, recording, and archiving all our public meetings would also provide access to these meetings for people who cannot be present in person but are interested. I would also suggest that as some people see what challenges we face, they might be interested in getting more involved.

Monterey Is Our Community.

We have an awesome responsibility to honor those who were here before, those who are here now, and those who will be here in the future. Taking care of this beautiful town is our shared responsibility. We certainly can have different views, priorities, and approaches, yet we all share the responsibility and the magic of Monterey.

—Jeff Zimmerman

A Primer for Sunpower

The Renewable Energy Working Group has printed a summary of the assessment of solar energy potential in the Town of Monterey written by UMass Clean Energy Extension students Myah Shostek and Jessica Podesta. Residents may pick up a copy at the transfer station, town hall, library, or community center.

The summary is also posted on the Town of Monterey website under the Renewable Energy Working Group tab.

The full report is thirty-one pages of detailed background information. Chapters include grid infrastructure assessment, community infrastructure, and solar resource assessment; there are a number of maps illustrating various details. The students' work has already proved its value to the Working Group as it plans for municipal generation of clean energy that can win broad support from voters and residents.

Few townspeople are likely to study the full report, but the summary is only four pages, and will help inform responses to the next step in the students' year-long effort, namely, the survey that has now been mailed to all households. The summary is our highlights-reel. You will learn from it, as we have, for example, about the town's place in the existing electrical grid: Three-phase power in Monterey follows Route 23 with a few short extensions to the north and south of Main Road. These high-capacity lines are needed for the generation of medium- to large-scale solar power. New three-phase lines add about a million dollars per mile to the cost of solar energy development. In addition, three-phase lines in Monterey are "near-saturated" due to existing large solar arrays in New Marlborough and Sheffield, which are electrically upstream of us on the grid. There are limits to how much independently generated power the grid can absorb. Who knew? The Working Group is learning on the job, with help from the UMass students, as well as our paid professional consultant, Beacon Integrated Solutions.

The learning curve for individuals is also steep in the current period of rapid change. A wealth of helpful, up-to-date information, including many sources of financial support, can be found at the Boston-based Green Energy Consumers Alliance. Check it out at greenenergyconsumers.org.

We hope everyone will pick up a copy of the assessment summary, so that we can be well-informed filling out our surveys. We want to know what you think; it's the best way to build a strong consensus for action. Monterey can make a significant contribution by generating energy from the sun, doing its small part to renovate our outdated, environmentally damaging energy infrastructure. The fact that we can only matters if we do.

—Peter Murkett, Chairperson
Renewable Energy Working Group

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Informational Session
FY 2024 Budget

There will be an informational meeting to discuss the FY 2024 proposed budget with the finance committee on Thursday, May 4, at 6 p.m., at town hall. This will be a good opportunity to review the budget and ask questions.

To preview the budget, go to mon-tereyma.gov/town-meeting-warrants to access the warrant for the May town meeting, which includes the budget.

—Michele Miller, chair
Monterey Finance Committee

FLOATING OVER YOU
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opening reception: Fri, May 5, 5:30-7pm
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Monterey Native Plants Working Group

Backyard Ecologists Series
Julie Kern and Colta Ives present
A Tale of Two Gardens
Monterey Community Center
May 13, 11 am Free!

pollinators01245@gmail.com

Council on Aging

May is "Older Americans Month" and the council is marking the event by offering opportunities to exercise and stay healthy. Lace up those sneakers!

For starters, we are excited to present a unique exercise experience on Wednesday afternoon, May 10, at 4 p.m. Please mark your calendars for this free introductory class, "Exercise with Annie." It's always easier to exercise in a class instead of on your own, and we hope this will be the first in a series of classes. Annie Rye is an educated movement therapist certified in pilates, gyrotonics, restorative yoga and more, and has worked at Canyon Ranch and Cranwell (now Miraval). She has created her own unique approach to exercising as we age. Participants are seated for most of the class and Annie's approach can be easily modified.

Another option is the Walk Massachusetts Challenge, which officially opens on May 1. (See below.) You sign up online at walkmachallenge.com and set a walking goal for yourself—daily, weekly, or monthly—and do your best to stay the course through October as you track your progress on the website. You can walk alone or with others, inside or out, and win chances to be entered into a drawing to win a $50 Visa, $25 Amazon, or $10 Dunkin' gift card. The more you walk, the more chances you have to win. By completing the challenge, your local council on aging gets a raffle entry to win up to $1,000 for fitness programming. Register now!

A final walking challenge to consider is joining the annual American Parkinson's Disease Association Optimism Walk, which takes place in Framingham, MA on May 21. Our very own COA-sponsored Parkinson's Support Group is part of a team for this event named the Western Mass Movers and Shakers. Please see the separate article on the Optimism Walk on page 9 for more information on how to register and/or donate.

As a further nod to Older Americans Month, both of our movies have a touch of nostalgia, and we will again be sponsoring an Elder Law lecture. Details below!

Hope to see you soon!

To reach me to reserve for events, with questions about scheduled events, or suggestions for new ones, please call (413) 528-1443, extension 112, or email me at coaoutreach@montereyma.gov. Phone messages are picked up once daily Monday through Friday.

—Kathryn Roberts
CoA Outreach Coordinator/
Administrative Assistant

Monterey Softball
Open Call

All softball players
Join a 50+ year tradition of
pick-up slow pitch softball.
Ages 10 to 80.
Summer Sunday mornings
Greene Park, Monterey
Batting practice at 10
Games begin at 10:30

WALK
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Massachusetts Councils On Aging
Earn chances to win prizes for you and the Monterey Council on Aging.
Register on https://walkmachallenge.com and choose one of the challenges based on a Commonwealth of Massachusetts fun fact. Choose based on your current abilities...Be your own guide as to what you can do. You can walk inside, outside, at home or in the neighborhood, on a track, on a treadmill, at a park,... with family, with friends, with your dog or alone.

Wendy Germain

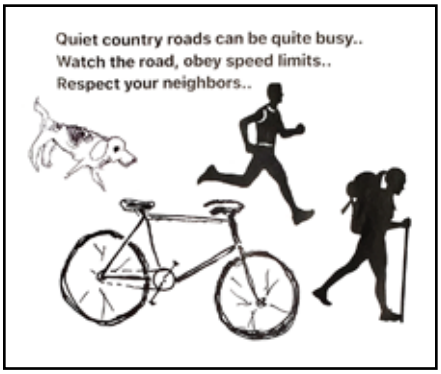
On a joyous spring Patriot's Day, a near-capacity crowd gathered for a Council on Aging-sponsored lunch at the community center with folks from all around Monterey seeing old friends and making new ones. The CoA is very grateful to Ned Amidon Castille for joining us to help people to learn the hidden secrets of their cell phones!

Summer Intern at Library

The Monterey Library is looking for an intern for the summer to help out with the summer reading program. We have six programs scheduled on the following Saturdays: July 1, 8, 15, and 22, and August 5 and 12. Those days the hours would be from 10 a.m. to noon. There is more work that can be done before, after, or during the week. There is also the possibility of doing a story hour or craft during the week, or on another Saturday morning.

This internship should start in June assisting with publicity and planning. Other than the shows, the hours are flexible, and the pay is negotiable. If you are at all interested, go to the library website, montereymasslibrary.org, and fill out the form and submit.

—Mark Makuc
Library Director



Monterey Community Center

The tent will be arriving around Memorial Day weekend. With it comes our excitement to put away all things winter and bring on summer.

We are looking forward to at least three local musicians having concerts under the tent. These will be sponsored by our local cultural council and another is volunteering with some talented friends who were inspired when they attended Eric Martin and Karen Axelrod last summer. Details to come!

We are looking forward to resuming our popular cookbook club. Be on the lookout for details.

If your neighborhood potluck group wants to reserve time and space, just let us know.

Thanks!

Weekly, bi-weekly and monthly activities

Mondays: Simple Meditation—all are welcome. Bring a cushion for comfortable sitting, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Tuesdays: Chair yoga, 10 to 11 a.m.

Tuesdays: Mahjong, 7 to 9 p.m.

Tuesdays and Fridays: Bridge, 1 to 4 p.m.

Wednesdays: Tai chi with David Crowe, at 10 a.m. $30 fee for the month.

Alternate Thursdays: Chorus, May 11 and 25, at 4:15 p.m.

Alternate Thursdays: Music jam sessions with Mark Andrews. May 4, 18, and June 1, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. All skill levels are welcome, instruments and singers. If you are interested. please contact Mark Andrews at mccjamgroup@gmail.com.

Fridays: Super gentle yoga, 10 to 11 a.m. To register, please email jamesboneparth76@gmail.com.

Last Friday of the Month: Transformational breathwork, May 26, at 5 p.m.

Saturdays: Coffee club, 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Alternate Saturdays: Art sessions for painting and drawing with Margaret Buchte, May 6, and 20, 1 to 2:15 p.m. No fee. For details and materials, please email margaretbuchte@gmail.com. Please register (see below).

Saturdays: Ping-pong, 2:30 p.m.

Sundays: Al Anon family group meeting, 9 a.m.

Wednesday, May 24: Council on Aging documentary movie, showing *The Automat*, at 2 p.m. Fourth Wednesday of the month.

Thursday, May 4: Darn yarners, at 10 a.m. First Thursday of the month.

Thursday, May 18: Wellness check, 2 to 3 p.m. Third Thursday of the month. Tritown Health nurses. Checkups include blood pressure, pulse, and blood oxygen levels. No charge for Monterey residents, no appointment needed.

Special Events:

Shodo, Japanese calligraphy, the art of writing with ink and brush on special washi paper. With these basic tools, you can create attractive pictorial characters. The art came from China 2000 years ago, and has developed into an aristocratic Japanese pastime, a scholarly skill, and a traditional art taught in elementary school. Michelle Arnot, who holds a license in this art from the Japanese Calligraphy Society, will guide you in both writing and painting with ink.

Monday, May 8, 1 to 3:15 p.m. Writing and painting with ink.

For questions, or to register, please email calendar@ccmonterey.org, or call (413) 528-3600. Registration is strongly advised. $10 fee.

Backyard Ecologists Series: Saturday, May 13, 11 a.m. Two very talented native plants gardeners, Colta Ives and Julie Kern, will present "A Tale of Two Gardens," the story of how they use native plants in their respective gardens, one shady, one not. Sponsored by the Monterey Native Plants Working Group. Contact Pollinators01245@gmail.com to register. There is no charge.

Memorial Day Parade, Monday, May 29, at 1 p.m.

Coming up:

Three summer outdoor concerts, under the tent.

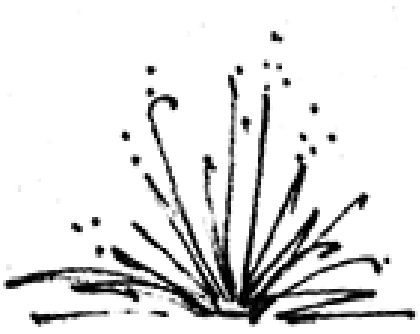
Cookbook club.

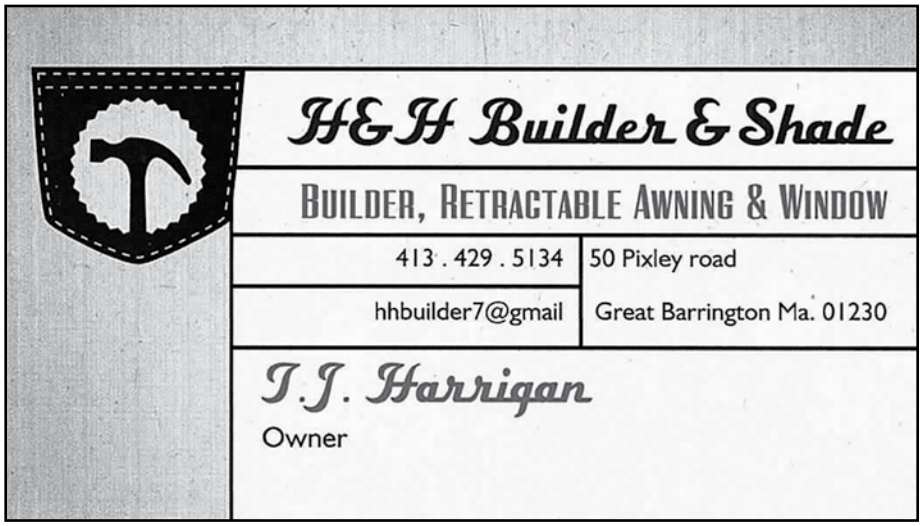
You can find more information on events at our website ccmonterey.org or by calling (413) 528-3600, or emailing calendar@ccmonterey.org.

—Mary Makuc, MCC Coordinator and Nancy Kleban

Correction

On page 11 in the April issue a photo of an outhouse was placed in jest alongside the community center news written by Mary Makuc. Just before going to print the person who had the idea asked to have their name removed, which left the mistaken impression that the image had been included in Mary's write-up. She had no responsibility for that.





Council on Aging Events

Events

Monday, May 1: Monthly CoA board meeting at town hall from 10 a.m. to noon. The agenda is posted on the town hall website. All are welcome.

Wednesday, May 10: Exercise with Annie! at the community center at 4 p.m. Join us for a free introductory class of a unique approach to exercising as we age (most exercise done seated). See page 7.

Wednesday, May 10: Movie night at the Monterey Library at 7 p.m. showing *The Fabelmans*. This December 2022 film is a touching family story, part memoir, part ode to the power of movies, from acclaimed Director Steven Spielberg. The council will serve light refreshments.

Wednesday May 17: Monthly Lunch at Agave (Mexican food) at noon. Call or email Kathryn at the number or email above to reserve your spot.

Thursday, May 18: Wellness check at the community center, 2 to 3 p.m. Tritown Health nurses will check blood pressure, pulse, and blood oxygen level. Flu and Covid vaccines will also be available. No appointment necessary. For those who are homebound and unable to come to the community center, please call Jill Sweet at (413) 717-7209 to arrange for a home visit.

Wednesday May 24: Documentary film at the community center at 2 p.m., showing *The Automat*. This 2021 documentary looks back to tell the story of the Horn & Hardart automats, the first of which opened in Philadelphia in 1902, and the last of which closed in New York City in 1991. The film includes an original song sung by Mel Brooks and cameos by Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Carl Reiner, and others. The council will serve light refreshments.

Wednesday, May 31: Annual Elder Law Presentation at the community center at 2:30 pm by GB Attorney Susan Smith. Learn the basics about estate planning and get your questions answered. RSVP to Kathryn preferred but not required.

Ongoing Services

Parkinson's Support Group: This month's meeting is on Thursday, May 4 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Monterey Library. Richard Pargament began our APDA-approved support group in October 2021. He and Roberta Weiss always provide a kind, compassionate, and informative two hours. Caregivers are encouraged to attend. Call the CoA at (413) 528-1443, extension 112, if you'd like more information.

Transportation: For seniors and people with disabilities needing trips to Great Barrington and Pittsfield. Call (413) 528-1881. Forty-eight-hours notice required to be sure of a ride.

Foot Nurse: Beverly Dunn is available for home visits. Call (413) 446-2469 to schedule an appointment. The council covers $10 of her fee.

Free Safety Vests: Vests to ensure you are visible to car traffic when walking, running or on your bike are available in town hall for walkers and bikers.

Parkinson's Disease Optimism Walk

The Monterey Council on Aging is a proud sponsor and supporter of the Southern Berkshire Parkinson's Support Group (SBPSG). The SBPSG meets monthly in the Monterey Library, and is an affiliate of Massachusetts chapter of the American Parkinson's Disease Association (APDA). APDA Mass helped our local group get started and helps to keep it going by making organizational recommendations and identifying several of our presenters. It held a very productive statewide conference for group facilitators last year.

In addition to supporting our group, APDA helps people with Parkinson's and their care partners through its YouTube channel, funds research projects, organizes Zoom and in person conferences, and much more.

APDA's annual "Optimism Walk" takes place in Framingham, MA on Sunday, May 21. The walking team that SBPSG is part of for this event is called the Western Mass Movers and Shakers.

There may be a bus to bring those interested to Framingham from western Massachusetts. If enough people are interested in taking the bus, a stop will be made in Lee to pick us up. If you're interested in attending the event to watch or walk, and possibly traveling to Framingham by bus, please contact Richard Pargament, leader of our local SBPSG, at Richard.Pargament@gmail.com or (646) 596-1178.

General information regarding the Optimism Walk and the link for registration are on the following web page. (apdaparkinson.org/community/massachusetts/upcoming-events-ma/).

A totally voluntary contribution of any amount will help APDA continue its good work, which includes helping our SBPSG.

The following web address brings you to the fundraising page for our team.: apdaparkinson.donordrive.com/participant/Richard-Pargament).

—Lin Saberski, Chair
Monterey Council on Aging

Pantry PickUp
Early Covid Days and Now

The Monterey Pantry PickUp began in October 2020 at the start of the Covid pandemic when several Monterey residents discussed the fact that some of their neighbors were food insecure and that that was both intolerable and fixable. An action plan emerged from these informal discussions—Kay Purcell was an early mover and shaker, joined by Andrea Dubrow, Mary Makuc, Kyle Pierce, Laurie Shaw, and others—and the pantry was born. Critical to its birth was the looming Covid pandemic which intensified the perception that immediate action was needed; equally important was the immediate generosity of Pastor Liz Goodman of the United Church of Christ who made the church basement available for the pantry's work.

Contact was made with other pantries in neighboring towns, as well as with Berkshire Bounty, an existing not-for-profit distributor of free local farm produce in the county. Fliers were posted in town and an article published in the *Monterey News* to spread the word of the availability of food at no charge. Individual phone calls were made on a strictly confidential basis to possible users of the service.

A leadership team of a half dozen or so Monterey residents emerged from all of this initial organizational work that is still largely in place and meets monthly via Zoom.

Most importantly, a large group of volunteer workers soon emerged that, week in and week out, has proven to be the essential backbone of the pantry's operations. Indeed, the purpose of this report is to celebrate this extraordinary group of Monterey volunteers by detailing all the many tasks they perform. Each week there are fifteen volunteers involved in making the pantry work. Their roles follow:

A volunteer schedules the nine volunteers needed to work in the pantry each week. This schedule is worked out on a monthly basis, but many adjustments are needed to accommodate everyone's ever-changing personal schedule.

The pantry workers: three sorters pack up the boxes with foodstuffs, while one volunteer picks up food at Big Y in Great Barrington, another volunteer picks up dairy from High Lawn Farm, while a third volunteer picks up meats from Wohrle's in Pittsfield, and a fourth volunteer makes home deliveries to recipients who can't come in to pick up their boxes. Finally a fifth volunteer picks up the garbage and compost for disposal. Most of this work is done early Saturday morning to prepare the food boxes for pickup late morning and early afternoon.

Yet another volunteer sends out weekly advance reminders to the volunteers on tap that week, and a scheduler orders the food in advance from Berkshire Bounty, Wohrle's, and High Lawn Farm, plus toilet paper from Brigham's. Another scheduler sends out the weekly distribution list and customer list, and more volunteers carry out the boxes of food on Saturday to the recipients' cars (since on-site parking at the church is sharply limited).

In addition to the weekly tasks, there is also a volunteer who monitors donations, sends thank you notes, and pays bills; another who purchases cereals once a month, another who purchases supplies as needed. A separate volunteer does intakes and orientation for new volunteers and new recipients and also monitors the pantry's voicemail. Finally a volunteer generates a twice-yearly fundraising letter and other publicity as needed.

In all, there are approximately forty pantry volunteers who pitch in to complete all these tasks. We distribute twenty to twenty-four boxes of food serving approximately fifty people each week. The collaboration and esprit de corps of the volunteers is a blessing in itself. To become a pantry volunteer, call the pantry at (413) 429-4254 and leave a voicemail detailing your name and phone number and the best time to call you back.

Finally, a humongous "thank you" to all the food and financial donors, to the business donors and farm donors, to Berkshire Bounty, and to the church—without whom the pantry would not be possible.

—Laurie Shaw and S. L. Wallach
For the pantry leadership team

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8 Town Regional School District Agreement.

Since our February 2023 update, the 8 Town board has made substantial progress on developing the terms of a regional school district agreement that would govern an 8 Town district. Except for assessment methodologies (which continue under board deliberation), the board has reached agreement on most all of the substantive provisions. Among the most important, we have reached agreement on new school committee governance, district transition provisions, and which issues would require a 2/3 supermajority school committee vote (including votes to approve school budgets and incur debt, any vote to amend the regional agreement, and any vote to close a school).

School Closures

The board agreed on a detailed process that would have to be followed before any school committee vote. It also agreed that in addition to a supermajority at the school committee level (with a requirement that the majority include affirmative votes from school committee representatives resident in six of the eight towns), any vote to close a school would need to be approved by the voters of six of the eight member towns. The board also agreed to include provisions that would allow for intra-district choice. Parents would have the option to keep their children in their existing schools through all grade levels offered in that school (and associated middle grades) even if that school were not the one in closest proximity to their home. Intra-district choice would also be available to students to attend programs unique to a school, and, subject to seat availability, for general family preferences.

Assessment Methodologies

At the April 11 board meeting, our finance subcommittee presented its recommendation on how costs of a merged district would be assessed across its eight member towns. The methodologies cover operating costs (always the largest share of a town's assessment), capital costs generally, and capital costs for construction of a new high school in Great Barrington. The full presentation of that finance subcommittee recommendation is posted on the website 8towns.org. The finance subcommittee vote in favor of the recommendation was unanimous among the five voting members of the subcommittee, and nine-to-one among the ten RSDPB members who actively participated in the finance subcommittee deliberations (which spanned fourteen meetings over nine months). Full board deliberations on the recommended methodologies will begin at the next board meeting on May 3.

Timeline

The 8 Town board is targeting late May/early June for a vote on a recommendation on the proposed merger and a proposed regional agreement. If the board votes in favor of merger, that recommendation would be put before the voters at special town meetings to be held this fall to allow for additional community education and outreach.

—Lucy Prashker, Chair
8 Town Regional School District
Planning Board

Letters of Appreciation

Thank you to Richard Pargament

The Monterey Select Board wishes to thank Richard Pargament for his generous donation of $2,400 to support visiting speakers at the council on aging's monthly Parkinson's support group. Richard, Kyle Pierce, and Mary Makuc were instrumental in getting this group up and running, and it is providing a very important support network, for Monterey residents and folks from surrounding communities. Reach out to Kathryn Roberts, the council on aging's outreach coordinator at coaoutreach@montereyma.gov if you would like to know more about the support group.

—Susan Cooper
On behalf of the select board

Fishing Derbies Return
Saturday, May 13

The Friends of the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery are excited to announce the summer fishing derbies. The derbies run on the second Saturdays, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The fishing pond is at 240 Hatchery Road in New Marlborough. From Monterey drive south down River Road, which will take you to the hatchery and the fishing pond further down.

This event is perfect for kids up to thirteen years old who are looking to have some fun and catch some fish. No experience necessary, we will be there to help. There will be prizes for the top fish caught and all participants will receive a prize.

We would like to extend a special thank you to all of our sponsors for making this event possible. Your support means the world to us and helps us to continue to hold these fun and exciting events.

This year, we have something extra special for all of our participants—t-shirts! That's right, every participant will receive a t-shirt as a souvenir of their day spent fishing with us. So mark your calendars, grab your fishing gear, and join us for a day of fun at the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery. We can't wait to see you there!

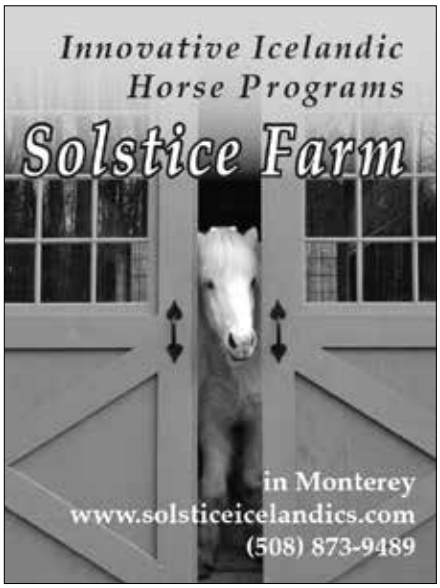
For those who are interested in participating, sign-ups will be available at the derby. We encourage everyone to come early to secure their spot in the fishing derby. Visit the Friends website at hatcheryfriends.org.

hatcheryfriends.org

Fishing derby t-shirts by Montereytshirts.com, right up River Road.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery in conjunction with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

—Dean Hudson, Hatchery Friends



GOULD FARM

Once a Gould Farmer, always a Gould Farmer

Once it touches your life, Gould Farm has a funny habit of sticking. One example of this is in our staff. Nearly half of Gould Farm staff came to Gould Farm as one-year volunteers and subsequently returned—sometimes quickly, sometimes years later—as staff. What's more, the average tenure of staff at Gould Farm is around nine years. What is it about Gould Farm that draws people back for more? In this article, we invite you to sit down with CJ Walton and learn about what drew him back to being the bakery manager at Gould Farm.

"The magic of Gould Farm for me is how it's part of this interesting food economy. There is an interconnectedness here around food. Food connects us to people, to the community," CJ reflected, as we sat at the picnic tables behind Main House. As we chatted in the late April sunshine, we shared a lunch of salads containing microgreens harvested the day before by guests on our garden team.

CJ first heard about Gould Farm when he was a student at Bard College at Simon's Rock, where he studied biochemistry, specifically the enzyme chemistry of protozoans. He then first came to the farm in 2000 after choosing not to pursue graduate school. He had worked good service jobs throughout college, thus "taking a staff position in the kitchen wasn't too much of a stretch," he shared.

"My first visit to the farm was on a Wednesday and I got to experience community meeting. Community meetings at Simon' Rock were also on Wednesday. The sense of community and that ritual felt very familiar to me."

Some Monterey folks may remember CJ. He was the bakery manager of the Harvest Barn until 2013. He took a ten-year hiatus to work elsewhere as a baker and a mechanic, first fixing coffee and restaurant equipment and then running his own business. But he missed the meaningful work and the community at Gould Farm. The realities of the pandemic combined with the stresses of caring for aging parents made the importance of these elements even more salient in his life.

CJ always loved being a work program leader at Gould Farm. Helping guests develop skills and insights around their personal learning styles so they could go on and apply these lessons outside of Gould Farm was always a joy for him. In the bakery, CJ points out, there are a lot of systems and mathematics involved: scaling recipes, sequencing ingredients properly, and participating in the workflow of the day. Creating a supportive environment in the bakery that invites each guest to learn and join the routine is one of the many things that drew CJ back.

And CJ's return could not have been better timed with the anticipated reopening of Roadside! As a part of the new vision for the café, there will be a baked goods display. CJ dreams of filling that display with croissants and breakfast danishes as well as supplying Roadside with the buns, bagels, and bread that will be a part of the regular café menu. CJ also plans to continue the production of value-added items such as jars of our maple syrup and homemade dressings. Although the Harvest Barn will not reopen as a mini café and storefront as it existed before the pandemic, all that creative energy and sense of hospitality will be put into our Roadside Store and Café where you will be able to pull over for a pancake or maybe a coffee and croissant in the near future.

Welcome back, CJ!

—Stephanie McMahon

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The generosity from the annual fund appeal, which we distribute to our mailing list, insert in the pick-up copies of the April issue, and as an attachment to the emailed copies, is what permits the *Monterey News* to publish month after month.

If you'd like to contribute, please send your donations to The Monterey News, PO Box 9, Monterey, MA 01245.

Our thanks to the folks listed below.

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ॐ

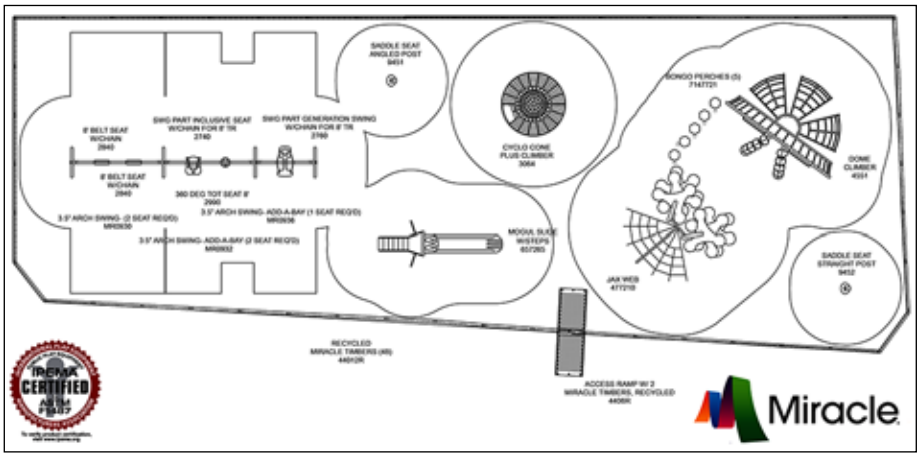
Playground Informational Meeting

For well over a year, the members of the Monterey Parks and Recreation Commission have been diligently working on the redesign of the playground at Greene Park. Based on the responses to the survey of townspeople conducted to gather information on what they wanted to see in a new playground, the available space for this project, and present-day concepts in playground safety and equipment, a new plan has been developed (see included rendering).

On Saturday, May 13, there will be an informational meeting at the Greene Park playground (if inclement weather, inside town hall). Drop by any time between 9 and 11 a.m. to see renderings of the plan and pictures of the selected equipment. Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission will be present to receive your comments and questions.

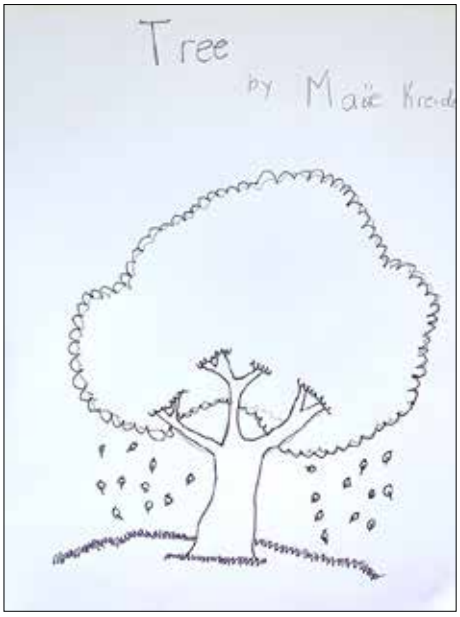
The new playground is funded by an allocation from Monterey's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds granted by the select board.

—Tom Mensi, Chair
Parks Commission



Young Creators

Images Writing School News



Tree, *Maisie K., 7*

Handprint bunny by Evie P, age 4.

Stella Hurst in the Brewer Pond culvert during the winter drawdown. Photo by Oskar Hurst.

Portrait of Cillian Murphy, played by Tomas Shelby from the Netflix series "Peaky Blinders." Pencil and charcoal on thick artist paper. By Samuel Hurst, 9th grade.

Impromptu backdrop (with curtain) for an ad-libbed play, "Adventure in a Meadow." Nara J., 8.

This is a space for young creators of images, poems, stories, or school news. Elizabeth Evans will collect scans or well-lit photos of kids work. Contact Elizabeth via email at evans.elizabethv@gmail.com.
"Young Creators," Emmett J., age 6; Nara J., age 8.

Mugs by Samuel Hurst, 15, Josephine Hurst, 17, and Oskar Hurst, 19.

STEAM Workshops

Sparks at Flying Cloud Farm announces that the first of four STEAM (science technology engineering art math) workshops for children ages 7 through 14 will be held on Saturday, May 20, from 9:30 to noon at the Flying Cloud farm (off Route 183) in New Marlborough. Ceramicist and science educator Jane Burke will lead activities that connect science, engineering, and math to making Art. The workshop will be free thanks to the generous support of the Monterey, New Marlborough, and Sandisfield Cultural Councils. Pre-registration is required. Contact Jane at janesburke@gmail.com or text (413) 429-6103.

—Jane Burke

Colta Ives, a youthful creator.

PLAY GROUP

South Berkshire Kids Playgroup

Monterey Library

Thursdays, 10 to 11 a.m.
February 3, 10, 17, & 24

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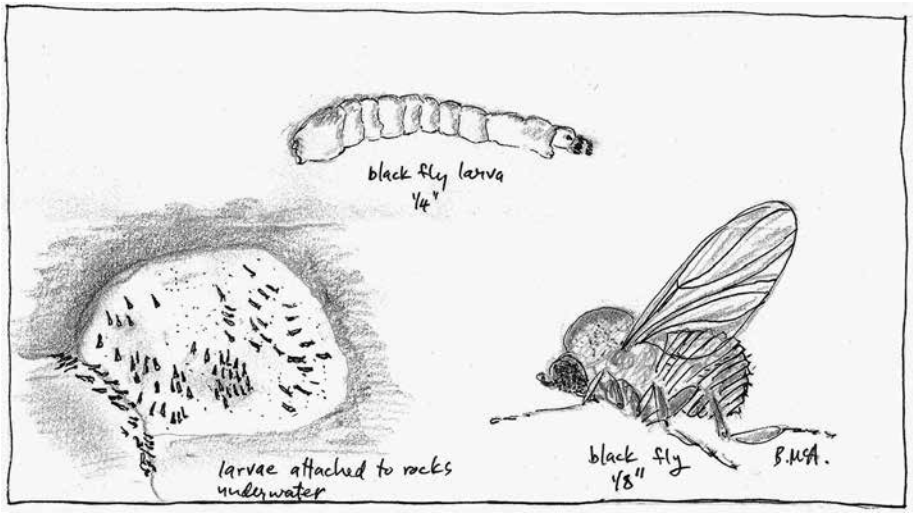
Blackflies

"I'll Die With the Blackflies Pickin' My Bones. . ."

—Bill Staines, folk singer



The merry month of May! How we homesteaders scheme and work to get as much outside work done as we can before May comes along. We think strategically way back in October, raking and trimming, digging and filling the wheelbarrow. All so we don't have to be outside so much in early May. In April we work like crazy in the orchard and garden so we can hide inside some in May. Of course, you do have to get out in May, and you want to, but it has always been the time of bug dope, head nets, and long sleeves.

This is the time of a small insect (1/8 inch long) known locally by some as a "mayfly," but more accurately as a blackfly. "Mayfly" could be a name for any fly-type insect that pops out in May, but there are many species of critters that hit the scene now. There is the mayfly that is well-known to folks who go fly fishing for trout. They put on a lure, a floating hook fancied up to look like the real insect so it will fool a fish. They need to know what is hatching, right now. Many make their own lures or flies. They are the experts.

The blackflies do hatch out of the brooks now, but I doubt you can make a fishing lure that is so tiny. They have spent their childhood in the brook, anchored to rocks or vegetation. The blackfly female lays her eggs on rocks, leaves, or branches just at the edge of swift-moving water in a river or brook. Sometimes she lays the eggs on the surface of the water. Here the egg hatches and a tiny worm-like larva falls into the water and fastens onto the rocks using a circle of strong hooks at its posterior (rear) end. The anterior (head) end points downstream and waves in the current. There are two food-gathering "mouth fans" which sweep the water for tiny living things to eat: protozoa, diatoms, algae.

If for some reason the larva needs to move around on its rock, it spins a strong silk from its anterior end and fastens this to the rock. Then it lets go with the posterior hooks and flips to a new place, hooks on again, and releases the silk. This way it can flip end-over-end downstream to find a more favorable mooring place.

The next stage in development takes place inside a cocoon, which is spun of silk and fastened to the rock. The pupa, inside, is developing now toward the adult form. There is a little hole in the anterior end of the cocoon and the pupa's external gills stick out into the water where they can extract oxygen.

During the larval and pupal stages, the insect stores oxygen under its skin, making an air bubble. When metamorphosis is complete, the fly, in its capsule of air, emerges from the cocoon underwater and bobs to the surface where the bubble pops and the adult flies off without ever getting wet.

Males and females fly about in swarms, getting their first meals of nectar from spring flowers. Soon the females feel a need for a blood meal. They are developing eggs and need extra protein. Only the females are equipped with piercing mouthparts, and they are especially attracted to dark, warm, carbon dioxide-producing creatures. When we first go out to work in the yard the flies may not find us. But as soon as we warm up and breathe heavily, especially if we wear dark clothes or hat, we will notice a black blizzard of hungry females around our heads.

Maybe it helps to remember that the flies that bite us are feeding someone else, their own developing eggs and next generation, as well as a host of predators from the fish in the streams to the birds of the air. With our blood we are part of that web of life, thanks in the month of May to the tiny blackfly, which is one of the wonders of nature, as are we.

—Bonner McAllester

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Remembrance
Judy Hayes

Judith Bidwell Shaw Hayes closed her beautiful blue eyes and quietly passed away on March 30, 2023, at the age of 85. She leaves her sweet, gentle footprints on the hearts of her family and friends, whom she loved and was dearly loved by. She was married for fifty-five years to Arnold Hayes, of Cleveland, Ohio, until his passing in March 2020. They lived and raised their daughters in Monterey following Arnie's retirement from the military in 1977.

Born in New York City on January 31, 1938 to Helen Bidwell Shaw and George E. Shaw, Judy grew up in Great Barrington, and spent summers in Monterey at the "Slab-Shack," her family's cottage on Lake Garfield. She attended Searles High School in Great Barrington, then Westfield State Teachers College. She was teaching elementary school in New Jersey when she met her future husband who was playing in a band at a local hangout. Arnie Hayes was part of a trio from the 79th Army Band stationed in Fort Monmouth and they connected instantly. Between sets and after his show they talked for hours outside under the moonlight, sharing with each other their life stories and discovering much in common, including music. They wed on February 13, 1965.

While raising their daughters on military bases in Fort Monmouth, NJ, Panama, Edgewood Arsenal, MD, Fort Devens, MA, and Fort Meade, MD, she was a supportive military wife, and was elected President of the NCO Wives Club. Wherever the family lived, she made sure it felt like home. Once the family moved to Monterey, she worked as the children's librarian at the Mason Library in Great Barrington and discovered other creative pursuits. She woke her daughters with song instead of an alarm clock, sang in the church choir, and joined barbershop-style singing groups (the Cobbletones / Hill and Dale Singers). She wrote poems and stories (many inspired by her first grandchild, Jesse). She studied Higher Self Yoga and astrology. She and her husband collected and sold antiques. She took art classes and found joy in creating pastel and watercolor paintings. She nurtured

Bob Cutick

her vegetable gardens and discovered the cooking shows on television, and most recently the Monterey Library's Cookbook Club. She was open-minded and open-hearted, generous, imaginative, and spiritual. She and Arnie both loved animals and could never turn away a stray in need of a home. She loved summer cocktail hour at the lake with her family, chatting and sipping a glass of merlot while watching the light change on the lake.

She was predeceased by her husband and her sister, Deborah Shaw. She leaves her sister, Susan Shaw Kaplan of Texas, her two daughters, Karen Hayes Traynor (and son-in-law Christopher Traynor), of Halifax, MA; Linda Hayes Lentz (and partner, John Horrigan), of West Milford, NJ, and her son, David Smith (and his wife, Kimberly), of Fairhaven, NJ. She also leaves behind eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren (with another on the way). She felt enormously grateful to have her family, especially finding and reuniting with her son whom she had relinquished through adoption in 1961. In her final days she expressed with great love and contentment that her family was everything to her and that she had been blessed with everything in life she could have ever wanted or hoped for.

A memorial service celebrating her life was held on April 15. The family welcomes donations in Judith's name to any Monterey charitable organization (Bidwell House Museum, Food Pantry, Public Library, First Responders).

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Remembrance
Ian Jenkins

Ian Ross Jenkins, MD, passed away at the age of eighty-one on March 1 at the Kimball Farms nursing care facility in Lenox as the result of severe injuries, complicating several underlying medical conditions, sustained in a solo car accident on Tyringham Road last August. Ian had been a part-time and then full-time resident of Monterey for several decades.

Ian grew up in Sunnyside Gardens, Queens, NY. He attended the Little Red School House and Elizabeth Irwin High School in Manhattan, graduating in 1960. He attended Earlham College in Richmond, IN, graduating in 1964. For several years he lived in Philadelphia with his first wife and worked as a social worker. As the Vietnam War was raging he enlisted in the Army's Medical Corp a month before he was scheduled to be drafted.

In the Army, Ian trained to be a surgical nurse at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, then worked at Letterman Hospital in San Francisco and Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington DC. He served as a surgical nurse in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne Division for more than a year, landing in-country during the Tet offensive. He was stationed at a fire-support base twenty-seven "klicks" below the DMZ where the mission was to keep wounded alive for the foty-five-minute helicopter ride to a base hospital in Hue. In this mission they were remarkably successful, attaining a 98+% survival rate for wounded brought in from the field.

On return to the US he continued his medical training, first acquiring necessary biology and chemistry coursework at the Columbia University School of General Studies and then attending New York Medical College, interning at NYU Medical Center and Bellevue Hospital and training as a psychiatrist.

As the only board-certified child psychiatrist in NYC who knew sign language, he was among the first waves of medical professionals entering New York's infamous Willowbrook center, where, for example, he identified a teenaged resident who had been institutionalized sincethe age of three whose only deficit was a 70% hearing impairment. Ian maintained

a practice in NYC as well as working for several institutions serving deaf children, such as the Brooklyn Archdiocese.

Ian and his then-wife Maria acquired and carefully restored and expanded a pre-Revolutionary structure in Monterey. Over time Ian became a full-time Monterey resident. He participated in several Monterey organizations, including the *Monterey News*, and helped edit *Monterey: A Local History*. Ian had many avocations and interests. He ran in several NYC marathons, raced a restored 1960s Jaguar at tracks such as Lime Rock, was an iron monger and wood carver, and a student of history, religion, and the sciences.

A service of remembrance will be held at 12:15 on Saturday, May 27, at the Monterey United Church of Christ. The service will be followed by a luncheon/reception at Ian's home on Hupi Road. All of the community is welcome to attend.

Ian is survived by his brother, Peter; two nephews, Christopher and David, a niece, Kate; a grand-niece, Maya, and two grand-nephews, Samuel and Eli.

The family wishes to express its utmost gratitude and appreciation to the Monterey Police Department, Fire/Rescue and EMS services for their dedication and valiant efforts on Ian's behalf. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Monterey Public Library.

—Peter Jenkins

Celebration of Life for Agnes Mulroy

A celebration of life for Agnes Mulroy, who died December 30, 2022, will be held at the Monterey Library on Sunday, June 25, from 1 to 4 p.m.

The family invites friends to join them in sharing remembrances of Agnes. Monterey was the home she loved from the 1970s to 2015, when she moved to Miami, FL to be closer to her family.

Please save the date.

—Evelyn Vallianos

Robert McMahon Projects

If you were a client of Robert McMahon, Architect, and wish to have the architectural drawings and files pertaining to your project from his files, please email Jeanne Randorf at mcdorf@gmail.com to arrange to pick them up. Files remaining will be destroyed in three months.

—Jeanne Randorf

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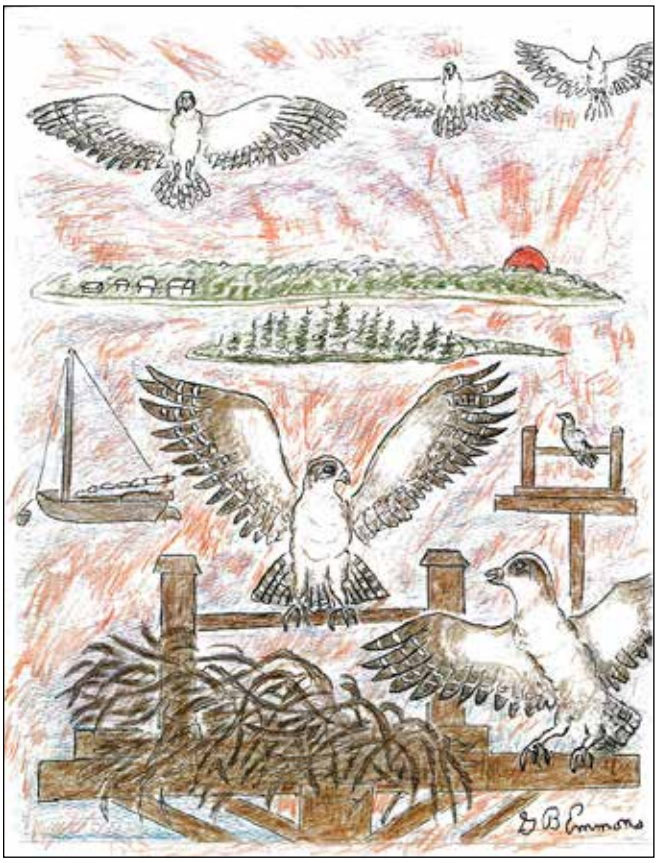
Osprey Spring Migration Ahead of Schedule



It was well over fifty years ago that the sad story of osprey numbers along the south shore of Buzzards Bay was almost completely depleted due to the wide spraying of DDT, poisoning that thinned their egg shells which led them to breaking during incubation. In the years from 1860 to 1979 the fledgling numbers were in a deep depression until the use of DDT was totally banned, quickly reversing the downward trend which in the years since had led to approximately three hundred nests in the same coastal area.

My illustration of the ospreys shows the recent spring arrival two weeks earlier than last year back to both of the wooden nesting towers directly behind my seaside home on Little Bay in Fairhaven. Their earlier arrival might possibly be due to the changing climate. Anr outcome might be an increased number of successful clutches this year compared to last season.

The total migration along the Atlantic flyway is at least a thousand miles both ways, first passing the coastal Connecticut River Basin, then the Hudson River outlet, the Delaware flood plain, and eventually the Shenandoah valley. But the full migration, revealed over the past decade thanks to lightweight radio "backpacks" shows New England osprey migrating to South America. This trip of up to 2,700 miles can be flown in as few as seventeen days.

The New England coastal area provides the ospreys with a constant availability of herring and menhaden which leads to a positive healthy appearance of their brown spangled wings as well as an abundant display of feathers on the top and back of their heads.

As they experience the regional magnetic fields both coming and returning, their implanted instinct for direction and distance, along with their homing instinct, brings them home on time each year without fail. The recent arrival of ospreys here in Fairhaven is testimony that similar instincts brought them home several weeks ahead of time.

—George B. Emmons

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Historical Society News

History Talk May 18

The "Third Thursday History Talk" is scheduled for May 18, 7 p.m. The topic will be announced later via email. On April 20, Barbara Swann gave a fascinating talk about Montereyans who fought in the Civil War.

The Brewer Family of Monterey – Part II

This month, we are continuing with the results of recent, ongoing research about the Brewer family who were very influential in town affairs from the founding through the middle 1800s. Several generations lived here and had large families which intermarried with other founders.

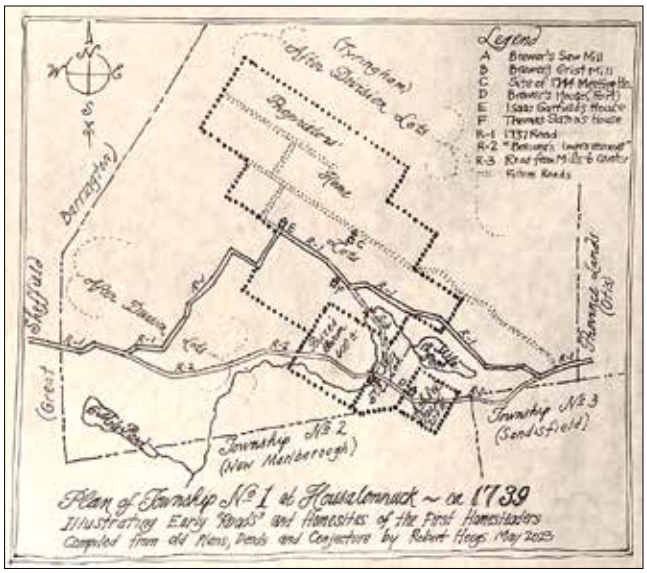
First I'd like to thank Mark Little who has shared his extensive research about the Brewers and other early families for his 2012 paper about Brookmead.

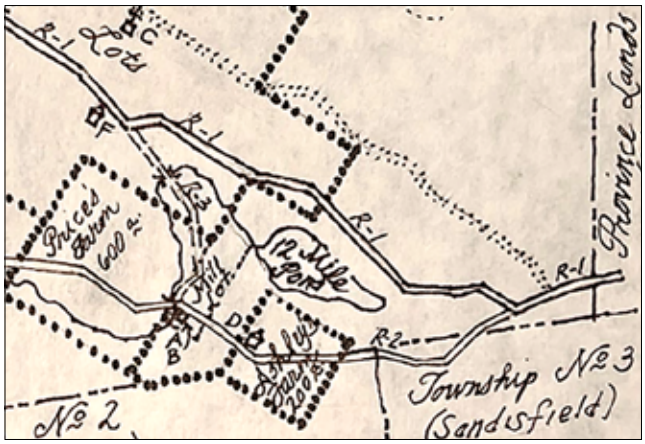
Second, I'd like to correct a couple of mistakes in last month's issue about the Brewers. Michael Germain pointed out that my transcription of Capt. John Brewer's gravestone gave his death date as 1736 instead of 1756—the photo of the tombstone seemed to confirm that date. Well, it turns out the photo I used had been "enhanced" by its author to make it easier to read. But the enhancement of the death date incorrectly made the death date appear as 1736 instead of 1756.

In addition, I erroneously stated that Hannah Brewer's father, Robert Merriam, became a land owner in No. 1; the Robert Merriam who owned land here was actually her nephew, Robert, son of her brother Joseph Merriam (who married Capt. John Brewer's sister, Mary.) Are you confused yet? The families were intermingled.

Now, continuing about Capt. John Brewer and his wife Hannah (Merriam) Brewer. There are various versions of the story about their arrival here in Township No 1 in 1739. The following article was published Jan. 17, 1850, in the *Pittsfield Sun* commemorating several descendants of the intermarried founding families of Tyringham-Monterey who had died the previous year. (Author anonymous.)

"Daniel Garfield was the 12th and last surviving child of [Isaac Garfield] the first permanent settler of Tyringham (now Monterey,) and he and Jonas Brewer and Isaac Brewer, of Stockbridge, were





grandsons of Capt. John Brewer, who in August 1739 made the first road for teams into the County of Berkshire…

"Lieut. Isaac Garfield, father of Daniel, came from Weston in the spring of 1739 with a Mr. Slaton. They had with them a horse and cow, and for five months saw no other human beings besides themselves. In going to Westfield for flour, &c. they learned that [Capt. John] Brewer was on his way from Hopkinton with his family of a wife and eight children, hired help and several teams. They went to meet him and assisted him in cutting his way through from Blandford to the S. W. shore of the bay on the six mile [sic] or Brewer pond, where Brewer settled. Garfield had already cleared on the Garfield farm, which had been drawn by the Rev. Mr. Williams of Weston, and Slaton on the Thomas (now Wright) farm."

There were at this time settlements at Sheffield, Great Barrington and Stockbridge on the Housatonic, which had been reached by a foot path from Westfield; and Brewer in going to visit some relatives, the Williams's and Jones's at Stockbridge, had been induced to settle between them and the settlements of the Connecticut River. [Capt. John Brewer] kept the first tavern in Monterey, a license for which was procured from him by his cousin, Col. E. Williams, the founder of Williams College."

There are a number of interesting details in this story that I have not seen elsewhere, among them that Capt. Brewer brought his whole family with him in 1739. That's hard to imagine since his lot had not yet been cleared nor his house built. And, as noted, there were scarcely any roads worthy of the name.

The only "road" from Blandford to Sheffield through No. 1 was an Indian path over the mountains through the "Green Woods." During 1737, several freeholders in Sheffield petitioned the MA General Court to improve the road, saying that they "did undertake with great fatigue & difficulty upon our own cost & charge make a good & feasible Sleigh Road from Sheffield to New Glaskow [Blandford] being according to common estimation thirty five miles … and the people living in these parts are now able, and in the winter past [1737-38] actually did pass & repass to & from Westfield with more than twenty sleighs were Loaden, thro' a wilderness which before was tho't almost impassable on Horse back."

By 1739, Isaac Garfield and Thomas Slaton were able to use the "Sleigh Road" and they "assisted [Brewer] in cutting his way through" to No. 1. Two county roads passed through No. 1. The northerly "County Road" followed what are now Hupi Road, Beartown Mountain Road and Brett Road. This road (labelled R-1 on the compiled plan) went through the center of the home lots of the original proprietors laid out by the surveyors in 1737. Another

"County Way – The Old Way" (labeled R-2 on the plan) is shown on some old maps roughly following present Route 23 south of 12 Mile Pond (Lake Garfield). Brewer's Mill site was along the southerly county road, but over a mile south of the northerly county (Hupi) road and almost two miles south of where the Meeting House was planned. Capt. John Brewer reportedly "improved" this section of road.

The records are vague, but it is logical to assume that Capt. Brewer worked with the other resident proprietors to build a north-south road (labeled R-3) to connect from the new mill site to the town center (that we now call "Old Center"). This is now Tyringham Road and Beartown Mountain Road. (The proprietors officially voted to lay out that road in 1750.) The accompanying compiled plan illustrates what I imagine the fledgling settlement called Township No. 1 consisted of about 1739.

Try to imagine: Capt. Brewer and his family and other settlers coming to live in this remote hinterland, leaving the relatively well-established and "civilized" towns like Sudbury, Lexington, Watertown, and Hopkinton. Capt. Brewer arrived with a few "hired help and several teams" and with his wife and eight children (who may have come later). He and his helpers built a saw mill, a grist mill, and at least one if not two dams and mill ponds to provide the water power for the mills. They cleared his home site, built his house, and plowed and planted crops to sustain his family. And they built "roads" so his customers could get to and from his mills.

He and his family—and the other pioneering residents—worked hard to survive. And at least some of them lived long and prospered.

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We have received many new and renewed memberships; if you haven't already joined, we hope you will. Send a check addressed to Monterey Historical Society, PO Box 381, Monterey, MA 01245. An Individual Membership is only $15, Family Membership is $25. Please include your email address so we can add you to our mailing list.

Thank you for your enthusiastic support.

—Rob Hoogs,
on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Knox Gallery in May

Carol Diehl's *Floating Over You*, from a series of paintings that the artist produced between 2004 and 2008, will open at Knox Gallery on Friday, May 5. A reception will celebrate the opening from 5:30 to 7 p.m. that evening. Please join us!

Diehl uses abstraction and realism in what she calls "a futile attempt to find balance between order and chaos, precision and spontaneity." These paintings, which have not been previously exhibited, are a departure from the diaristic geometric abstractions that have characterized much of her work. (One image is in the ad on page 6.)

The artist, who lives in Housatonic, has exhibited extensively in solo and group exhibitions at galleries and museums including Hirschl & Adler Modern, Sidney Janis, The Berkshire Museum, and the Queens Museum of Art. She has received numerous fellowships, including from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. She is also known as an art critic and poet, and her book, *Banksy: Completed*, was recently published by the MIT Press. Earlier in her career she was a longtime contributing editor for *Art in America*, and was published in many prominent periodicals including *ARTnews*, *New York*, *Art & Auction*, *Art & Antiques* (Contributing Editor, 1984 -1995), *Metropolis, Review*, *Arts*, and the *New Art Examiner* (founding Managing Editor). In 2011 Diehl received a Creative Capital/Andy Warhol Foundation grant for her blog, *Art Vent*. She performs readings of her poetry in performance at various prominent venues.

Daytime Book Group

The next date for the Daytime Book Group is Thursday, May 18, at 1:30 in the library. The book to read is *Guests on Earth* by Lee Smith. This group will meet on the third Thursday of each month.

—Bonner McAllester

2007_isla_de_encanta, © Carol Diehl

Diehl taught in the Graduate Fine Arts Program of the School of Visual Arts in New York from1996-2006, and served on the Core Faculty at Bennington College from 1998-2002. She has been a Visiting Artist and lectured at, among others, Yale University (Graduate Sculpture), Stanford University, Massachusetts College of Art, and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown.

All Knox Gallery events are admission free. Exhibits can be viewed during library hours (see back page of this issue). At present, masks are required in the library, but we encourage visitors to check current Covid protocols before attending any of our events. Knox Gallery, Monterey Library, 452 Main Road, Monterey, MA, 528-3795; MontereyMassLibrary.org/Knox-Gallery; Facebook.com/KnoxGallery.

—MaryPaul Yates

Letters

Trading Our History for Dollars

Cronk Road is a beautiful country road two miles from the center of Monterey. It's a narrow dirt and gravel road and has a fascinating history that dates back to the late1700s. A Revolutionary War hero built the first home you pass when you turn onto the road. It was also the home of multiTony Award-winning librettist, Hugh Wheeler, until his passing in the 1980s. There is a gorgeous canopy of old oak, maple, and hemlock trees that line both sides of the road as you turn onto it from Sandisfield Road. The trees create a breathtaking tunnel-like effect in the spring, summer, and fall when the leaves are full, and in the winter a magical web of snow covered branches.

I bought my home on Cronk Road in 1988 and have, with great pleasure, restored the 1785 house that was originally a barn. I have tended the row of old growth trees that line my side of the road for the last thirty-five years and have noticed over the years that people from all over the Berkshires are drawn to this road. They come to run and walk with friends, to ride their bikes, to walk their dogs and to cross country ski. Every time I turn from the larger black-topped Sandisfield Road onto Cronk Road, I am filled with a delightful sense of its peace and natural beauty. Sadly, this is all about to be destroyed.

Eight years ago I saw a man on the road near my house putting stakes in the ground and wrapping orange plastic tape around the beautiful eighty- to one-hundred-year-old trees along my property. I asked him what he was doing. He said he was marking a plan for National Grid to bring electrical poles down Cronk Road from a pole at the far side of my house to Sandisfield Road, two tenths of a mile away. A couple from NYC had bought a sixty-five acre property on the opposite side of Sandisfield Road and instead of bringing their power from what would have been the more logical source, the existing poles on Sandisfield Road near

the Thompson's farm, they had decided they could save money by coming down Cronk Road which was closer to their property and therefore would be less costly to them.

The man on the road, Tony Corsi, who worked for National Grid at the time, told me that they had done two previous studies on Cronk Road for this NY couple and found it not viable for electric poles based on the steep curve in the road, the closeness of our homes to the road, and the existing trees, stone walls, and landscaping. However, in this **third** feasibility study, which he was now conducting for the benefit of the NY couple, National Grid suddenly changed their minds and decided Cronk Road was not only feasible but they were giving it the go ahead. I told Mr. Corsi I would have to fight this in whatever way I could. He laughed at me (literally in my face) and said that no one stops National Grid from putting their poles wherever they want to.

In the spring of 2014 I received a notice of a hearing for pole permits on Cronk Road and made sure to be at the meeting. During several select board meetings over the next few months, I spoke up about the issues involved in choosing Cronk Road for the poles and the harm this would cause to our lives and properties. We also discussed the positive aspects of bringing the poles down Sandisfield Road for the Monterey community. It would create potential for additional building lots to tie in to the poles in both directions on Sandisfield Road, whereas coming down Cronk Road. would at best serve only the one new part-time customer.

In the fall of 2014 a vote was taken by the select board (Kenn Basler, Scott Jenssen, and Wayne Burkhart). They turned down the pole permit on Cronk Road and told National Grid to figure out a way to bring the poles down Sandisfield Road. My neighbors and I were beyond relieved and it was a glorious precedent-breaking decision against National Grid's arrogant omnipotence (per Mr. Corsi). Some time later the NY couple told National Grid that they were withdrawing their request for a permit and had decided to go off the grid.

For the next eight years we lived with the belief that the town had had our backs in our moment of need. That they had consciously chosen to protect our homes and community over National Grid, whose only skin in the game was to get the job done regardless of the consequences. We believed that the town understood that once you destroy a road like this, there is

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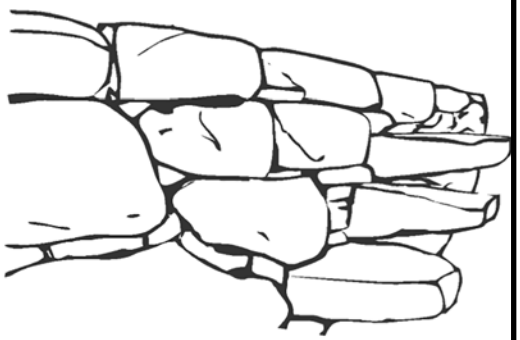

no going back. It's lost forever. We were deeply grateful.

Then out of the blue in 2022 the NY couple once again petitioned National Grid to bring poles down Cronk Road. When I got news of this I asked both National Grid and the couple from NY what they felt had changed to make them confident that they could overturn a decision that had been carefully considered and turned down by an earlier select board. Neither one responded to my question.

I felt as though I was being put through a kind of double jeopardy. I would have to navigate this threatening issue all over again. I spent the next several weeks doing research, gathering information, and preparing myself to bring a meaningful and constructive argument to the proceedings for a second time. Then something strange happened. A tuned-in friend of mine in Monterey took me aside and warned me that this select board was "no longer in our favor." I remember thinking at the time "How could that be true? They haven't even heard both sides of the argument."

A **fourth** survey was begun on Cronk Road by National Grid—more stakes in the road, more trucks and surveyors. My research led me to the company that had been hired by National Grid to design the pole placements. I called and spoke to one of the design engineers. I asked why National Grid would do yet again another survey (now four in total) on this road after the town of Monterey had previously turned them down. He told me that he "had never known anything like this to happen." He said that the "word" was that "there was someone involved who had connections." He wouldn't say who or why, just that I was not alone in finding this very peculiar. When I next spoke to National Grid and suggested that the cost of the four separate surveys could well have covered the difference in the cost between putting poles on Cronk or Sandisfield Road, the executive laughed ironically and said that was probably true.

In the fall of 2022 when the pole permit hearing was put on the town hall schedule again, Scott Jenssen was the only common denominator in the past and present select boards. He was familiar with the issues and had previously voted against the pole placements. The two new members were Susan Cooper and Justin Makuc. Since these two individuals now on the board were the only aspect of the equation that had changed in the intervening years, I felt optimistic that the previous decision would be upheld. I had spoken with an executive at National Grid and they said that they were also feeling optimistic on my behalf that Cronk Road might very well prove unsuitable if my neighbors and I weren't willing to allow the trees on our property to be removed. I later found out that National Grid had gone to great lengths to figure out a way that they would only have to destroy trees that were a bit closer to the road, even if they were in my meadow behind my fence. They were a part of the town's "right of way" and therefore not legally "ours."

My neighbors, Michael Vatis and Bettina Schwartz, and I arrived at the pole permit meeting at town hall on November 16, 2022. There were numerous representatives from National Grid present, and the couple from NY. We had just settled into our seats when my neighbor Michael Vatis leaned over and whispered in my ear what I was already sensing: "They have already made up their minds." I looked around the room and realized that our arrival in the room was not being welcomed. Ms. Cooper and Mr. Makuc avoided looking at us and when they did it was with a certain air of disdain.

Within minutes of National Grid ending their presentation on how they intended to place their poles, Mr. Makuc attempted to set aside the open meeting process and called for a vote by the select board. We raised our hands and said we would like to speak. Mr. Makuc and Ms. Cooper appeared annoyed that any discussion was needed or expected. They also had no interest in explaining to us why this issue was up for reassessment. There were a couple of weird comments by Ms. Cooper who for some reason kept wanting to say to anyone who would listen, that she thought we had an interest in denying the NY couple their right to have electricity. That was the furthest thing from our minds and we said so, but she persisted. Mr. Makuc kept pushing for a vote and trying to shut down any further conversation.

Michael Vatis (who had just driven three hours to attend the meeting) and I attempted to explain the reasons why the previous decision against the permit had been supported in 2014 and why we felt strongly that to overturn it, without cause or reason, would be unjust. We tried to talk about the history of the road, the closeness of our houses to the potential wires

Cont. on page 26

Jerrold N. Raab, DDS PC

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Trading History for Dollars, cont. from p.25
and poles, the damage that would inevitably be done to the mature trees, and the wisdom of bringing the poles down Sandisfield Road for our community's future. Mr. Makuc was unabashedly not interested in anything we had to say. He even derisively scoffed at me at one point when I corrected something he said that was inaccurate. He seemed singularly interested in what National Grid had to say, as though their opinions were the only ones of value in the room. The word "railroaded" comes to mind.

We were, needless to say, confused and disturbed by what we were witnessing and experiencing. I asked at one point, what it meant for the select board to so inexplicably reject the decision of a previous board with no reason being put forward. Mr Makuc told me that "my question was irrelevant."

The only sympathetic voice in the room was Scott Jenssen's. He asked questions, and suggested alternatives and listened to us when we spoke. In the end he also was the singular vote against the permit, but his vote wasn't enough to save us, our road, our homes, our trees, or the quality of our lives. Mr. Makuc and Ms. Cooper did what they had clearly already decided they were going to do. They voted in favor of giving National Grid the permit. The permit was rushed into the room for their signatures, and we were unceremoniously ushered out of the room. And just like that, the deed was done.

Do Select Board Decisions Last?

This does of course beg the question: Do any of a select board's decisions have value or weight or meaning, and if so, for what period of time? Can we rely on the decisions that have been made by one board in a given term to have validity when new board members are elected—especially when there have been no other changes in the circumstances—or are a previous board's decisions just willy nilly up for grabs, ready to be thrown out by a new board to suit their own fancy—with no explanations necessary to the people whose well being hangs in the balance?

I looked into appealing their decision. It turns out there is no procedure in place for appealing a decision made by the select board. I would like to see that change.

No one wants the NY couple on Sandisfield Road to be without power. They have a right to petition for it and National Grid has an obligation to supply it. The question is—at what cost to the existing residents, the environment, and the community? In this case there is a way to not only bring power to them along a road that would not damage anyone's lives or property, but would also be useful to others who build houses in the future. This is singularly about money. There is a $70,000 price difference in the cost of the two roads. If my neighbors and I could afford to pay the difference we would. Both National Grid and the NY couple knew when they built their house that Cronk Road had been turned down as an option and that they would have to spend the money to come down Sandisfield Road. Now they all seem to want to deny this because I suppose it puts them in a bad light. The decision they made will do the most harm to the most people in our community who use and love this road and to the two families whose well being will be irrevocably harmed by this decision.

I am not through fighting for my home and for Cronk Road and I feel an obligation to let the residents of Monterey know what is going on so that we can possibly find an alternative solution together before it's too late. There are only so many roads like this left in Monterey. They tie us to the richness of our history and the beauty of our environment. They deserve to be protected by us. National Grid clearly does not share our concerns. We must stand up for these concerns ourselves or forever lose the very qualities of life that brought us here and made us want to stay and make this place our home.

I appealed personally to our state representative Smitty Pignatelli. He initially assured me that he would look into this and follow up with me, but sadly he did not return my phone calls or emails for five months. He emailed me recently to say there is nothing he can do. I have appealed personally to executives at National Grid, asking them to consider becoming a positive force by expanding their business model to one that gives back to the communities they serve when difficult situations such as this arise. They can clearly choose to save a historic road by putting their poles elsewhere, but as of this moment are choosing not to.

Short of a miracle, the only thing left as far as I can see is civil disobedience. I could lay down on Cronk Road when the trucks come to put in the poles, or chain myself to a tree that they want to demolish. I have a friend in Great Barrington who said "Call me when they arrive. I have fifty friends who would happily show up to protest with you in a matter of hours." Will I do any of these things? I haven't decided. I only know that right now I am filled with a terrible dread every morning; fearful that I will look out my window and see them coming with their trucks and chainsaws to destroy the place that is my home.

Sincerely,

—Karen Allen

SUSAN M. SMITH
Attorney At Law

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Bidwell House Museum

As I write this in mid-April, I can hear the birds singing and see green buds on the trees. Daffodils are everywhere and there is a feeling that winter is well and truly over. By the time you read this everything will likely be very green. In that spirit of renewal, we are excited to begin the Bidwell House Museum 2023 season. We have so many fun programs planned for this year along with a textile theme that has been "woven" into many of our events and I encourage you to sign up for weekly emails, if you have not already, so that you do not miss a thing.

Have you ever wanted to reach out and touch history? Talk to historical figures? On Saturday, May 20, from 1 to 4 p.m., you will have the opportunity to meet "General and Mrs. Washington," (pictured in the April *Monterey News*) who will be receiving visitors while enjoying the museum gardens during our season opening event. They are looking forward to chatting with visitors and answering all of your questions! Also in attendance will be the 3rd MA Regiment who will drill and share their experiences during the Revolutionary War. All of this is a preview of the amazing "Living History" weekend we have planned for June, which will be covered extensively in the next issue of the *Monterey News*. This event with "George and Martha" is free for members and $20 for non-members. Pre-registration is required. Light refreshments will be served and the gardens and grounds will be a wonderful place to spend some time on a Saturday afternoon.

Following our opening event, the museum is planning a week when members can take a guided house tour without an appointment. Tours will run May 22, 25, 26, and 27, at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Whether you are a new member who has yet to take the tour or a long-time member who has not been inside the house for a while, we invite you to visit the museum this week. Then on Monday, May 29, our official house tour season kicks off. Tours typically take forty-five to sixty minutes and look at the history of the Bidwell family and Monterey, the construction of the house and the amazing collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century furnishings and antiques. Tours are by appointment only on Monday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturdays, at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., or 3 p.m., and can be booked by calling the museum at (413) 528-6888, or by emailing bidwellhm2@gmail.com. We ask that reservations or cancellations all be made twenty-four hours in advance.

Following the start of tours, we have two history talks scheduled for early June, both on the theme of clothing in the eighteenth century. First, on Saturday, June 3, University of New Hampshire lecturer, Dr. Kimberly Alexander, will present her talk "'…and much stronger than any imported from England': Navigating New England Fashion & Politics During the Revolutionary Era, 1760s-1770s." This talk will be held via Zoom at 11 a.m.

The next weekend, on Saturday, June 10, we will hear from Ned Lazaro, Associate Curator of Costumes and Textiles at the Wadsworth Atheneum, who will present, "An Easy Air: Dress and Performance in the Long 18th Century." This talk will be held at 11 a.m. in person at the Tyringham Union Church, Main Road, Tyringham, and also via Zoom. Pre-registration is required for both talks and can be completed on the museum website bidwellhousemuseum.org/events/.

These events are just a taste of what we have planned for the 2023 season. As the summer goes on we will share information about all of our planned programs including "The Army on Campaign: A 1770s Living History Weekend from June 23-25," three more history talks, a talk on the history of lace, a wool spinning demonstration, three Housatonic Heritage hikes in September, a Maker Day event in October, and so much more. Check our website, Facebook, and Instagram regularly for updates on all of our 2023 programs.

One last date we want you to save is for our annual summer fundraising party in August. We are holding our "Party Gras" celebration on Saturday, August 19, from 4 to 7 p.m., at the museum. The party planning committee is having so much fun putting this event together, including booking a Zydeco band, and we will share all of the details soon.

Finally, do you enjoy the beautiful Bidwell gardens? Do you like working outside? We are looking for summer garden volunteers to work with the crew from Gardens of the Goddess this summer. Even if you only have an hour or two to spare each week, or can only help out a few times this summer, we would love to have you. Email the museum at bidwellhouse@gmail.com for more information.

The Bidwell House Museum is located at 100 Art School Road and the museum grounds—194 acres of woods, fields, historic stone walls, trails, and picnic sites—are open all year free of charge. The program of events can be found on the museum's website at bidwellhousemuseum.org/events/.

We can't wait to see you at the Bidwell House.

—Heather Kowalski
Executive Director

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May 2023 Wildlife Report

The Wilds of April: Bobcats, Birds, a Bear, and More

These are the exciting days of Spring, with plants popping up, migrations passing through and so many plants and animals springing into courtship and continuation of the species. You may not think of the plants as "courting," but they are. They get a little help from their insect pals, also from the wind, but the pollen and the fruits are the work of the individuals. Here we have the bloodroots blooming, the dutchmen's britches, coltsfoots since a month ago, trilliums early and sturdy, and the cottonwoods and maples dropping their catkins and blossoms with fertilized seeds coming next. No matter how odd we may think this spring has been, if the plants are resilient we can be, too. At least for now.

The skunk cabbage poked its amazing, unusual blossoms up and I took a photo (below) by the Quaker Meetinghouse beaver pond in Great Barrington, the second day of April. Suzanne Sawyer wrote toward the end of the month with the report that bushes and trees around her place are *not* blooming this month when they usually do. This is one way plants conserve energy to keep the "body" healthy if conditions are stressful. Next year may be a better one for managing the extra costs of reproduction.

Rick Whitney caught this wonderful image of an osprey on Lake Buel.

Dutchmen's britches at left; trilliums above. Photos by Bonner McAllester.

Backing up a month or more, Alice Berke told of having seen a mountain lion. This is always cause for excitement and celebration. Elaine Lynch wrote at the end of March that there was a "bobcat patrolling around the foundation of our house. She or he was particularly interested in the area under our back stoop. I guess we have her to thank for the lack of mice in our basement." The Lynches appreciate this.

Cora Baker had the recent thrill of watching a bobcat stroll close to the tall glass patio doors, and her cat Bean was also thrilled, from inside the house. Bean ran along to the next windows to keep track, and the bobcat walked on by.

There were reports from just up the road here of a big bear checking things out in the backyards, and then one day our dog set up a hullabaloo and we looked out to see a mid-sized black bear trundling off across the slope in the woods. The dog was on the deck, which has a fence, and the bear knew this barking had no bite. This bear may have horned in on some birdseed under the feeder.

Christopher Blair
DESIGN AND PLANNING
Residential Design
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413.528.4960 623 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Carol Edelman sent photos (below) of a grey fox on the porch, eating sunflower seeds and looking like it might be shedding its winter coat. Carol also sent colorful photos of bluebirds (above) moving into a handsome red birdbox made by Jacob in his school days, in shop class.

Over at Bonsai Cox's place there are finches of gold, also red ones called "purple finches," coming to the feeders. She sent a photograph of these (below). She also had an odd mourning dove visiting, with at least one bold white tail feather.

In more bird news we have an account from Liza Catino of Lake Buel. She has been seeing an osprey "all the time, now" and says what fun it is "to see this big bird

Bonner McAllester

swoop into the lake, flap its wings to dry them, and then take off with a fish." Her friend Rick Whitney visited in October one year and took a striking photograph of the osprey in an oak tree (page 28).

Early in April, Delight Dodyk wrote one windy day there were "throngs of common mergansers on the lake (Garfield). . . bobbing up and down with the whitecaps." She said how glad she is "they've found the lake a worthy stopover on their trip."

Joe Baker saw the first tree swallows here in the middle of April, also chipping sparrows and golden-crowned kinglets. The phoebes were back at the beginning of the month, and the yellow-bellied sapsucker, and then song sparrows a couple of days later.

We were watching woodfrog eggs in the little garden pool and by the third week in April they had hatched. Spotted salamanders were crossing Route 23 headed for Royal Pond near the Otis line one wet night about that same time.

Thank you for all this wild news, for observations and appreciation.

— Bonner McAllester
(413) 528-9385, bonnermca@gmail.com

Correction

In the April wildlife report, Bonner McAllester had written, "we are still feeding the birds, with no bears horning in just yet." Unfortunately the word "horning" was edited to "honing."

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Select Board Corner

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Our town website is a great way to access information about the town.

— Justin Makuc, Chair
Susan Cooper and Scott Jenssen
Monterey Select Board
(justin@montereyma.gov)
(susan@gmail.com)
(scott@montereyma.gov)

For general inquiries, please click "Contact Us."

For all meetings of town public bodies, go to the calendar on the home page. For agendas (with meeting location) and minutes, go to the individual board or commission tab.

Police Emergency Contacts

- For real emergencies, call **911**.
- The email address for the dispatch service is:

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- Police dispatch service number:

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- For non-emergencies to contact the Monterey Police Department, call:

  528-3211

A Backward Glance

To turn, turn will be our delight
Till by turning, turning we come round right.

From a Shaker folk song, *Simple Gifts*

I was back into quarantine for a few days recently following a significant Covid exposure. After being out and about with people for many months now, the break was a welcome respite, unleashing, as it did in the early days of the pandemic, motivation (which quickly waned) to tackle tasks often avoided.

The break gave me a chance, for one thing, to clear out the garage at long last. (If not now, when?)

Among the things I uncovered on a high corner shelf was a heavy cardboard box that I had held onto for forty years or so, and not looked at for decades. It contained letters and journals and old newspaper stories I had saved and schlepped from north Idaho to Manhattan, from one tiny New York apartment to the next, and finally, a few years ago, to Monterey. When I opened it and began reading my life flashed before me.

Flashed might not be exactly the right word. It took me three days to get through what proved to be a lively correspondence with a dozen people or so, several of whom had not crossed my mind in decades.

The experience felt revelatory, like a wormhole into the past, and a fleshing out of memories and states of mind that had mostly evaporated. It clarified the extent to which memory can flatten the distant past. The letters re-established some of its contour, filling in years of blank spaces, lending the past a greater depth and texture. They were like Marcel Proust's famous Madeleine, transporting me to a remembrance of things past.

In a way, letters seem historic—artifacts of a time long gone when people often set down their thoughts on paper. A time when long-distance phone calls were relatively expensive. When the immediate back and forth banter of email and texts was beyond imagining, much less the impact of TikTok or Facebook missives. I wonder how future historians will manage without letters to scour.

Also impressive was the good penmanship everyone seemed to exhibit—my own messy scrawl has deteriorated in the digital age to wild illegibility as my fingers grow increasingly lazy.

The letters recalled the dramatis personae of my twenties and thirties, friendships that doubtless shaped who I am today. A couple of names seemed totally unfamiliar, until their personalities emerged through hints in the letters. Some people I lost touch with years ago. Others remain very much a part of my life. At least four have now passed on. Yet all these people formed a kind of social scaffolding to my existence, deeply influencing who I am today.

The writing wasn't especially literary, even the paltry selection of love, or like, letters. A few notes seemed trivial enough to toss. But even after all this time I had a hard time throwing others away. (What would Marie Kondo do?) I decided, in many cases, to return them to the senders, so they, too, could have a glimpse into the past. The others I plan to burn, next time we have a ceremonial fire.

The letters mostly came from a time when my peers and I were finding our places in the world. They chronicled unsatisfying jobs, financial woes, disappointing relationships. Our shared longings seemed so personal and innocent compared to the intractable global challenges faced by young people today. The youthful angst that emerged from the correspondence was palpable. "I hope your tone was just a passing mood," was a theme.

As I re-read the letters after so many years have passed, I thought about my younger, insecure, often lonely former self. I wished I could travel through a wormhole in space/ time, and whisper to her to just relax, tell her that everything was going to be all right, eventually.

But who knows, given the mysterious nature of time, as physicists describe it, maybe I was able to get my message across. Maybe my communiques in 2023 to my much younger self guided my choices over the years. Because after many false starts and wrong turns, I somehow wound up in a place of delight.

—Janet Jensen

ॐ

Calendar

Monterey Community Center (MCC) activties on page 8.

Sundays: Monterey softball begins again. Batting practice at 10, games begin at 10:30 as weather permits.

Thursday, May 4: Parkinson's Support Group, 2 to 4 p.m., library. See page 9.

Informational session with finance committee, 6 p.m., town hall. See page 6.

Friday, May 5: Knox Gallery opening reception for Carol Diehl, 5:30 to 7 p.m. See page 23.

Saturday, May 6: Annual town meeting, 9:30 a.m., firehouse.

Tuesday, May 9: Town elections, 12 to 7 p.m., town hall.

Wednesday, May 10: Exercise with Annie, MCC, 4 p.m. See page 7.

Movie night, 7 p.m., library. Showing *The Fabelmans*. See page 9.

Saturday, May 13: Fishing derby, 9 to 10:30 a.m. See page 12.

Playground informational meeting, 11 a.m., Greene Park. See page 15.

Backyard Ecology Series, "A Tale of Two Gardens," 11 a.m. See page 8.

Wednesday, May 17: CoA lunch at Agave. See page 9.

Thursday, May 18: Daytime Book Group, 1:30, library. See page 23.

Wellness check, 2 to 3 p.m. See page 8.

Saturday, May 20: "General and Mrs. Washington," Bidwell Museum, 1 to 4 p.m. See page 27.

Wednesday, May 24: Documentary film, MCC, 2 p.m. Showing *The Automat*. See page 9.

Monday, May 29: Memorial Day parade, 1 p.m.

Wednesday, May 31: Elder law presentation, MCC, 2:30 p.m. See page 9.

Saturday, June 3: Bidwell History Talk with Dr. Kimberly Alexander, "Fashion and Politics," 11 a.m. See page 27.

Saturday, June 10: Bidwell History Talk, Ned Lazaro, "Dress and Performance," 11 a.m. See page 27.

Books in Brief

An Immense World

When we refer to senses we think of our five or six senses, and more importantly, *in terms* of our senses… how they tell us about our world. But Ed Yong tells us not only about a much greater variety of senses, including color, pain, heat, contact, surface vibrations, echo location, electric fields, and magnetic fields. Yong introduces us to the concept of "umwelt," the perceptual world of each individual organism. As humans we perceive the world in ways that are useful to us, but by no means do we sense all the stimuli that is constantly around us, and which other organisms perceive and rely upon. "To imagine their lives, 'you have to stretch your thinking to completely different levels of dimension'," one researcher said.

This book is packed with information presented in a clear and very readable way, with good humor and personal touches. It has opened my eyes to understand that no other organisms, including people I know, experience their umwelt in just the way I do—so I am trying to stretch my own thinking. *An Immense World* is available through the Monterey Library.

—Stephen Moore

If you enjoyed this brief book report (of about two hundred words), write a review yourself of a book that opened your eyes or that you particularly enjoyed.

Monterey News

The *Monterey News* is an independent nonprofit corporation dedicated to fostering communication in the Monterey community. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs. Submissions may be sent via email to montereynews9@gmail.com or to PO Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. For advertising rates or other information, contact the Editor at (413) 329-7912 or email.

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Assessor: 528-1443 x115
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Community Center: 528-3600
calendar@ccmonterey.org

Fire Department (non-emergency):
528-3136, chief@montereyma.gov

Highway Department: 528-1734
dpw1@montereyma.gov

Library: 528-3795
montereylibrary@gmail.com

Police Department (non-emergency):
528-3211, Alt./Emergency 528-3211
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Town Clerk: 528-1443 x113
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Town website: Montereyma.gov, under each department, for office hours.

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Contributions from local artists this month:
Colta Ives, pgs. 8, 17, 23; George Emmons & Liz Mulroy, p. 21; Bonner McAllester, p. 18.